

INTEROFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

DATE: September 19, 1983
TO: Chuck Maynard - San Mateo

CC: Thomas Bispham - DEQ
Dept. of Environmental Quality
Jim McCadden - City of Portland
P. Hinde - USCG

RECEIVED
SEP 22 1983

FROM: Stan West - Portland

NORTHWEST REGION

SUBJECT: Solvent Spill - September 8, 1983

At 8:15 P.M., September 8, 1983, our roving security guard discovered a leaking solvent tank. He immediately called the fire department who arrived at 8:25 P.M. and was admitted to the property.

The fire department discovered that the leak was coming from a ruptured sight gauge in the recycled Trichloroethylene tank. The valve to the sight gauge had been left open and unlocked. The sight gauge itself had broken, allowing material to leak from the tank. They closed the valve and the flow of material ceased.

The majority of the lost material ran into the roadway and to a storm sewer sump. The fire department attempted to divert the flow and covered the sewer grate. Although a substantial amount of product ran into the storm sewer, a significant amount puddled in the roadway due to the fire department's efforts.

At 9:00 P.M., the fire department called me and advised me of the problem. I immediately contacted Dick Tarr, the acting Tank Farm Supervisor. We both arrived at the plant at 9:20 P.M. and called Jack Johnston who arrived at 9:45. TV Channel 6 was present and Chief Horn was the spokesman.

An attempt was made to determine the quantity that had spilled. The first estimates ranged from 280 gallons to 2000 gallons. The broken sight gauge made getting an accurate reading impossible. Since the lowest estimate exceeded the RQ factor (reportable quantity) it was necessary to advise the appropriate authorities of the spill.

The fire department began cleanup. Using absorbent pads, they removed all standing liquid from the roadway. An emergency valve in the sewer line was closed to prevent any additional liquid from going down the sewer.

The water bureau was contacted to determine the direction of the flow of the sewer system. Barbara Rogers at the water department said that the maps were not clear. It appeared to her that the flow discharged into the river at pipe #18, but that the outflow was higher than the drainage field on our property. This would appear to restrict the flow. She estimated the time of discharge into the river to be late Friday morning or early Friday afternoon. She advised that any further information would have come from John

where did it go - recover
remedial
action
RQ - who
not to pick
whom

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Widmer at 7:30 A.M. when work crews were available. At 10:50 P.M., Chief Rutenberg of the U. S. Coast Guard called. He was told that approximately 280 gallons of Trichloroethylene had been spilled. He assigned Inspector Jim Hinde to the case for followup. Jim Hinde came to the office and a "Letter of Federal Interest" was signed.

No further action was taken until the next morning.

At 7:30 A.M., Friday, September 9, 1983, John Widmer of the City Water Bureau was contacted. After being appraised of the situation, he dispatched a crew to investigate. A sampling was taken from the manhole on Van Waters & Rogers property. A second sample was taken from the manhole where Van Waters & Rogers pipe discharges into the city main. A third sample was taken downstream from a manhole in front of American Steel. A fourth location was investigated in a flume that discharges directly into the river. It was discovered that a diverter was installed in location #3 that diverted all the flow into the city sanitary system which eventually ended up at the city sewage treatment plant in St. Johns.

Analysis showed the following:

Sample 1 - 95% Trichloroethylene - minimal flow.

Sample 2 - No presence of Trichloroethylene - minimal flow.

Sample 3 - No presence of Trichloroethylene - fairly rapid flow.

It was determined that the spilled material was trapped in the sewer pipe on Van Waters & Rogers property and that none had escaped into the main sewer system.

At the same time a new sight gauge was installed on the tank. A reading was taken of the contents and the exact quantity of product lost was determined to be 515 gallons.

John Squires at the St. Johns Sewage Treatment Plant was asked if they could handle 515 gallons of Trichloroethylene. They asked that we attempt to reduce the quantity by pumping the material out of the sewer.

A Van Waters & Rogers crew was assigned to pump from the manhole on Van Waters & Rogers property. The water and Trichloroethylene mixture was pumped into drums and samples taken periodically for analysis.

Early samples contained as much as 95% Trichloroethylene. After approximately 1300 gallons was removed the Trichloroethylene content had been reduced to less than 500 ppm. This information was passed to Mr. Edmonds of the City Water Bureau. He confirmed that contamination of less than 500 ppm would be acceptable. Further pumping was discontinued.

where is material now

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The Coast Guard was kept advised during this episode. They were last advised that cleanup was complete at 5:00 P.M., Friday.

On Monday, September 12, 1983 an additional sample was taken from the manhole. An analysis showed no Trichloroethylene present. Apparently the rain over the weekend cleared the remaining product from the sewer line.

To help reduce the possibility of reoccurrence of this problem, all four tanks will be equipped with ball valves in the sight gauge line. The valve also has a locking feature that will eliminate unauthorized opening of the valve. Also, a new type of sight gauge made of clear PVC tubing has been installed.

made
part of
cont.
plan

SAW
SAW:ac